



# VICTORY FARM VOLUNTEERS

VICTORY FARM  
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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
UNITED STATES FARM LABOR SUPERVISOR  
Letter

For your information

Subject: News Letter

## WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

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With the beginning of school and the ending of Extension's farm labor program, many of you are probably putting the real finishing touches to the youth programs in your States. Here in the VFV office, we do not look with absolute resignation on this development, for this very summer we have seen flourishing Extension programs for boys and girls on which farmers are wholly dependent to get the job done.

We have no information at this time about how far the Employment Services can go in duplicating our youth programs. We hope that if the law permits them to do so they will take up where we leave off. Granted, of course, that in some States the recruitment of youth is no longer a special problem because of the return of adult and family labor to the farm. And granted that in other areas large growers and their associations can do their own recruiting and hiring of supervisors without assistance.

We are concerned about the small farmer who has relied on the county agent or his farm labor assistant to get boy and girl live-ins or day-hauls, the farmers whose closest placement office is in a labor-short or industrial area and who hasn't the time himself to go out "beating the bushes" for bean pickers, "kid" weed pullers, or a dairy hand.

Vermont is one State which has a peculiar problem in the ending of the VFV live-in program there which has used between 500 and 700 youth from out-of-State each of the past emergency years. A recent meeting of county farm labor people with the State Employment Service chief at the University of Vermont brought some of the difficulties there into focus. The Employment Service would like to continue supplying Vermont farmers with live-in boys under a careful program of selection and supervision but is unsure whether such activities are a legitimate part of a placement service such as theirs. The fact that Vermont must go out-of-State to get youth workers is further complicating.

Other States will face lesser problems since the simple placement activity of a central office ought to take care of many needs for young workers, especially for day-hauls.

We shall attempt to keep you posted in ensuing news letters between now and the first of January concerning developments which may keep intact many of the fine youth programs that have been so beneficial to youth and farmers alike. Some developments may come from Washington, but the most of the news will originate in



the States. So let us hear from you, especially if you have any contacts with your State Employment Service people. Because some of the State Extension folks we've talked with are searching for ideas that will help keep youth programs alive, no matter who is the sponsoring agency, they will welcome answers found in other areas.

#### TAKE ROCK COUNTY, FOR INSTANCE

You can pick out many a county in the United States and find a different farm labor story in each one. We have a version from Rock County, Wisconsin, which records the busiest season for Ralph Mitby, the farm labor assistant, since the beginning of the farm labor program. Mitby relies on youth altogether for placements in corn detasseling, strawberries, and pea processing. And his corn detasseling program, visited by Roberta Clark of our staff this summer, is a topnotch one, attracting youth that ordinary recruiting methods could not get out, and well supervised throughout.

Anyway, Mitby writes that his total for June, July, and August is 2,037 placements, as compared with 1,798 last year. He was able to meet growers' requests for detassellers in a season that lasted 12 days instead of a normal 6 weeks and placed as many as 230 detassellers in 1 day.

#### LESSON FROM THE COURTS

A damage suit brought against the Bartolotta Bros., fruit growers in Columbia County, New York, contains some food for thought about supervision and farmer liability. It seems that young Frank Buffa was picking cherries while standing on a ladder on the Bartolotta farm when he fell to the ground and suffered a fractured neck. The boy and his father sued for a total of \$35,000, alleging that the boy was inexperienced in "setting" ladders and that he was permitted to do so without supervision by authorities on the farm.

Father and son were awarded just \$1,870, but even so the case has a significant lesson for any farmer who hires youth without supervising their work.

#### ORCHIDS FOR THE FARMER

John Downing, Maine VFV supervisor, has orchids to give the farmer in a statement we found in his 1946 annual report. Says he:

"I am continually amazed by the understanding and patience of the farmer in his dealings with an inexperienced city youth. He may be very positive in his opinion of the worthlessness of city youth or just youth in general at the beginning.... but during the employment period all the dealing with the youth shows thoughtfulness and full consideration with a minimum of friction.... The boy is to be envied for his opportunities to work with such a man and the farmer deserves praise for his job as a practical educator. (My underlines.)

#### WEATHER AND THE MIDWEST

The weather man, who played more than enough unkind tricks on Midwestern corn growers this year, wasn't in too good a mood when

Roberta Clark visited Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin in late July and early August. In both Saginaw, Michigan, and Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, she found the temperature in the 90's. It was so warm in parts of Wisconsin that boy and girl bean pickers had to be sent home from the fields at noon.

Doris Shimkus was Miss Clark's guide in Michigan and the two of them visited a supervised dispatching program in Saginaw County for vegetables, a few live-ins in Sanilac County, north of Detroit, and a cherry day-haul program using boys and girls from Detroit and the surrounding area. The need for Michigan's "live-aways"



has been reduced, even though these city volunteers have made a good record with farmers. In Detroit where even this summer the farm labor office could not fill all the requests for day-haul youth, there is likely to be a problem next year unless some agency does active recruiting.

In Indiana, Roberta arrived early for a late corn detasseling season but was able to see one detasseling camp in Tipton. About this camp she has glowing reports--the same fine kitchen and in-camp recreation set-up and topnotch field supervision program that I saw there 2 years ago. And from all reports selection of these southern Indiana boys is better every year. A. M. Nichter says the Indiana camps will carry on next year as before, with the seed corn companies assuming the financing of supervisors now paid by Extension.

In company with J. A. James, of Wisconsin's farm labor staff, Miss Clark first saw the corn detasseling day-hauls out of Janesville, Wisconsin, and this, she reports, is one of the finest programs she has seen along the lines of supervision and recruiting. Crew supervisors start with the boys and girls in the morning and stay with them throughout the day while the type of both youth and adults attracted to the program attests good recruiting techniques. Our staff member also brings back a picture of improved cherry camps in the famous Door County cherry region. Growers themselves have established some fine facilities in these camps for both domestic and Mexican workers. A good many Wisconsin high school boys migrate to the cherry country at harvest time.

IN PRINT....

"Education Is a Continuing Experience in Summer Camps" by J. H. Friedman in The Journal of the Florida Education

Association for May 1947. It's the story of the Florida youth who go to Connecticut each year to work in shade tobacco.

"News-Views Plays Cupid," in The Chicago Daily News pictorial section in July 1947, a pictorial record of a romance between a sailor and a girl whose picture appeared in a 1943 Daily News article about high school students on farms. On seeing the picture, the boy obtained the girl's 'phone number--and the final picture is this year's feature story shows their wedding.

"There Are No Dull Moments for Children on the Farm," by Franklin Wright in the Portland (Maine) Sunday Telegram for August 17, 1947, a feature story about a city youth and his three cousins on a Maine farm.

"Education on the Farm," in Industrial Bulletin, the monthly news magazine of the New York State Department of Labor, a nice story of New York's farm cadet program.

THE WAY THEY DO IT IN NEW YORK

Another of Miss Clark's field trips this summer took her to Western New York on her way back from the Midwest--and she reports

one of the most active recruitment campaigns anywhere for day-haul youth workers in Buffalo this year and a beautifully organized dispatching program, plus New York's own distinct educational program for educating its growers to comply with the child labor law which prohibits farmers from using youth under 14. In Rochester, dispatching is done by means of tickets issued youth, thus preventing under-age youngsters from even mounting the trucks or busses. New York, with its various State agencies cooperating, backs up county farm labor assistants with an ample staff of day-haul assistants. The entire set-up underlines the importance of the use of "old-enough" boys and girls in agriculture and would seem to assure continued organization for this phase of the youth program after Extension steps



out of the picture. Nelson Hopper, of Elton Hanks' staff, went along to show the western New York set-up to Miss Clark.

#### HERE AND THERE....

Talking with Minnesota's C. E. Bubnitz over the 'phone the other day, I was told that youth placements there already totaled

over 12,000, as compared with 8,750 placed last year. "BUB" says Minnesota has 4,500 live-ins this year....When I was in Nebraska in July, I saw two training meetings for youth corn detassellers and their mothers. J. V. Srb writes that they have completed 28 such meetings--all of them quite successful. At two meetings in Omaha a total of 185 youths and mothers were in attendance.

Northumberland County, Pennsylvania, used 267 school-age boys and girls in beans in one week in July....Illinois reports 2,153 seasonal youth placements, more than the total of men and women placed, as of the end of August....Using local youth workers to replace a camp of high school girls, Loraine County, Ohio, placed as many as 276 boys and girls a day at the peak harvest season in July....Wisconsin boys have done a topnotch job pitching peas and working as pea viners, according to Wisconsin's August news letter. High school boys worked as much as 15 to 16 hours a day and were paid 75 cents an hour. Boys, even as young as 15, took over the jobs formerly done by foreign workers or adults.

After a summer of scary crop reports, the news of Georgia's good cotton crop was welcome--and that reminds us that again this year Athens, Georgia, will have a cotton-picking contest with awards for school and college boys and girls as well as adults.

#### NEW ENGLAND REPORT

During August I visited New Hampshire, Maine, and Connecticut, while Miss Clark stopped in Vermont and also briefly in

Connecticut to see the tobacco camps which she had not seen before. Here are some New England developments we noted:

In both Maine and New Hampshire, I found the day-haul programs in beans were uniformly well supervised with work hours adjusted to meet the needs of young workers. In one area of New Hampshire, a committee of farmers has been set up to take care of transportation, recruitment, and supervision with little assistance from Extension. Throughout the two States, growers say they'll continue using the supervisors they've employed during the war as an essential part of getting the job done by youth in the future. Maine was using more day-haul youth than last year and some 150 live-ins. New Hampshire has 30 live-in boys from Boston and they did a good job.

Vermont--There were more than 500 live-ins this summer, as compared with 622 last year, and placed--incidentally--at an estimated cost of \$40 per youth. These out-of-State boys and a few girls have been markedly successful this year, and a lot of the credit goes to better selection methods. As regards the future, Vermont farmers term much of the local adult help "absolutely unreliable" if it is available at all and, because of the dearth of city population in the State, volunteer youth from Vermont itself are not to be had.

Connecticut--In the Connecticut Valley, which includes a portion of Massachusetts, this year youth camps in shade tobacco have increased to 25. Camps are operated on the usual level of excellence. Arrangements are being made to continue the camps just as they are next year without Extension's assistance, and plans are already under way for bringing in the Florida and Pennsylvania boys and girls.



Connecticut has placed some 400 live-in youth on dairy farms. Rigid inspection of transportation for all farm workers means that youth are day-hauled in vehicles about 100 percent as they should be for safety and comfort.

Throughout these New England States, farmers and growers are expressing disappointment and some deep concern over the end of the farm labor program.

#### SCHOOL BELLS AND SUGAR BEETS

Like many another State with fall harvest problems, Utah is always concerned about relations with the schools. In Utah, the school youngsters are vital labor for the sugar beet harvest. That fact plus a new State law has State Farm Labor Supervisor Morris Taylor worried.

Taylor writes that "if pupils are not in attendance, school automatically lose that much assistance. Consequently, several of our school boards who have been willing cooperators are now expressing anxiety over the financial picture and are somewhat reluctant to agree on dismissing youth from classes for farm work this year. If the going gets rough I believe we can secure their cooperation but we truly expect a marked reduction in the number of in-school youth who will be permitted to participate in the fall harvest."

#### A REMINDER ABOUT THE LAW

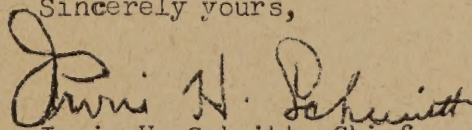
While we're on the subject of schools here's a reminder that the child-labor provisions of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act, which as you know don't apply to the employment of children on farms during school vacations, do apply to their employment during the school term. That's the law as explained to us by Mrs. Louise Q. Blodgett, of the Child Labor Branch of the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division.

"Children who are required by the school attendance laws of their own State to be in school," it was pointed out, "cannot be employed during school hours on farms which ship goods out of the State--except for their own parents on the home farm. Thus the compulsory school attendance law of a State in effect provides a legal minimum age at which a child may work in agriculture during school hours under the Federal law."

I think we could go on and say that employment in agriculture which is legal under State school attendance laws is legal under the Fair Labor Standards Act and I presume you are familiar with that act.

We still have a supply of "Farm Work for City Youth" available for orders from any of you who can use additional copies. I believe many school principals and others not already reached would like to see this publication.

Sincerely yours,



Irvin H. Schmitt, Chief  
Victory Farm Volunteers Division  
Extension Farm Labor Program

(Copy to directors, editors,  
State supervisors)



